

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-15 and 18-22 remain pending in the application.

The Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider earlier rejections in light of the following remarks. No new issues are raised nor is further search required as a result of the changes made herein. Entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested.

**Claims 1-7, 9 and 10 over Nabkel**

In the Office Action, claims 1-7, 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,963,626 to Nabkel ("Nabkel"). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 1-7, 9 and 10 recite a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message together with a security code corresponding to at least one pre-authorized caller to the telephone answering device who may secure a voice message.

Hence, the pending claims relate to pre- authorizing a party calling an answering machine to leave a message with a security code, with the security code corresponding to a caller. Pre-authorizing a party calling a telephone answering device and corresponding a party calling with a security word allows such actions as, e.g., removal of such benefits, tracking of security code use, implementation of security levels, etc. The cited prior art fails to disclose or suggest such benefits.

According to Nabkel, a subscriber that leaves a message may assign a message Personal Identification Number (PIN) associated with the message or a PIN associated with a specific individual (see col. 3, lines 13-28; col. 3, lines 55-58). A caller accessing messages enters an ID number and their PIN (see Nabkel, col. 4, lines 27-42).

Thus, Nabkel discloses a subscriber that calls an answering service to leave a message. The subscriber is able to assign a PIN associated with a message or a PIN associated with a specific individual. The specific individual users their PIN to access the message. Nabkel fails to disclose any type of pre-

authorization of the caller who may secure a voice message, as recited by claims 1-7, 9 and 10.

Nabkel fails to disclose a security code corresponding to at least one pre-authorized caller leaving a voice message, much less a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message together with a security code corresponding to at least one pre-authorized caller to the telephone answering device who may secure a voice message, as recited by claims 1-7, 9 and 10.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 1-7, 9 and 10 are patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing rejection be withdrawn.

#### **Claim 1 over Chee**

In the Office Action, claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,528,669 to Chee ("Chee"). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 recites a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message together with a security code corresponding to at least one pre-authorized caller to the telephone answering device who may secure a voice message.

According to Chee, where a user intends a mailbox feature to be restricted to an authorized caller, a mailbox command is used to assign a private identification number determined by a user (see col. 7, lines 45-50). Whether public or private, the identification number is previously entered by the user and stored by a CPU for comparison with decoded information from a DTMF circuitry of a signal processor circuitry (see Chee, col. 7, lines 51-55).

Chee discloses a user assigning a private identification number to a mailbox. A caller enters DTMF codes for comparison to the stored private identification number for access to a mailbox. Thus, Chee disclosing pre-assigning a security code to a mailbox is NOT pre-authorizing a caller with a corresponding security code who may secure a voice message, as recited by claim 1.

Chee fails to disclose a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message together with a security code corresponding to at least one pre-authorized caller to the telephone answering device who may secure a voice message, as recited by claim 1.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 1 is patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing rejection be withdrawn.

**Claims 1, 11-15 and 18-22 over Shur**

In the Office Action, claims 1, 1-15 and 18-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,461,665 to Shur et al. ("Shur"). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 recites a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message together with a security code corresponding to at least one pre-authorized caller to the telephone answering device who may secure a voice message. Claims 11-15 and 18-22 recite prompting a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message to enter an authorized security code corresponding to at least one pre-authorized caller to the telephone answering device who may secure a voice message.

According to Shur, when a caller selects to access a mailbox, the caller is prompted to enter his user access code or password (see col. 6, lines 14). Message type information includes whether the message is normal or confidential (see Shur, col. 4, lines 38-41).

Shur discloses conventional access to a message mailbox by having a caller enter an access code or password. However, the access code is a general access code that all callers would use to access a message mailbox, **NOT** corresponding to a pre-authorized caller, much less a **pre-authorized caller who may secure a voice message**, as recited by claims 1, 11-15 and 18-22.

Shur fails to disclose a security code corresponding to at least one pre-authorized caller to the telephone answering device who may secure a voice message, as recited by claims 1, 11-15 and 18-22.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 1, 11-15 and 18-22 are patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing rejection be withdrawn.

**Claim 8 over Nabkel in view of Carleton**

In the Office Action, claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Nabkel in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,966,351 to Carleton ("Carleton"). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 8 is dependent on claim 1, and is patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Claim 8 recites a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message together with a security code corresponding to at least one pre-authorized caller to the telephone answering device who may secure a voice message.

As discussed above, Nabkel fails to disclose or suggest a security code corresponding to at least one pre-authorized caller, much less a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message together with a security code corresponding to at least one pre-authorized caller to the telephone answering device who may secure a voice message, as recited by claim 8.

The Office Action relies on Carleton to allegedly make up for the deficiencies in Nabkel to arrive at the claimed invention. The Applicants respectfully disagree.

According to Carleton, a sender of electronic mail messages is able to access a recipient's mailbox to reprioritize messages previously sent by the sender (see Abstract). A sender is required to enter a security or identification password associated with a user's extension to access the electronic mail messages (see Carleton, col. 4, lines 20-39).

Carleton simply uses a conventional security or identification password to access a mailbox. As discussed with Shur above, Carleton discloses a general access code that all callers would use to access a message mailbox, **NOT** corresponding to a pre-authorized caller, much less corresponding to a pre-authorized caller who may secure a voice message, as recited by claim 8.

Neither Nabkel nor Carleton, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach or suggest a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling a telephone answering device to leave a voice message together with a security code, the security code corresponding to at least one pre-authorized caller to the telephone answering device who may secure a voice message, as recited by claim 8.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 8 is patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing rejection be withdrawn.

### **Conclusion**

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the subject application is in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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